

# METHOD AND APPARATUS FOR OPERATING A GAMING DEVICE

## CROSS-REFERENCE TO RELATED APPLICATION

This application is related to and claims the benefit of U.S. Provisional Application Serial No. 60/228,471, filed August 29, 2000, entitled "Method of Playing a Slot Machine (Dual Slots)".

## FIELD OF TECHNOLOGY

This invention relates primarily to electronic video gaming devices, and more particularly to electronic video slot machines which can operate two or more slot games at the same time on the same gaming device.

## BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

In a conventional slot machine, a single game is offered to the player. To play the game, a player deposits money in the form of coins, gaming tokens or paper currency either into a coin head or bill acceptor ("the coin-in"). The coins and gaming tokens are collected in a reservoir inside the gaming machine ("the hopper") while the paper currency is collected in the bill acceptor inside the gaming machine. If the coins, gaming tokens or paper currency are validated as authentic, the player accrues the appropriate number of playing units ("credits") on a credit

1 meter on the gaming machine depending on the denomination  
2 of the wager as set on the gaming machine. For example, a  
3 twenty-five cent gaming machine will accrue four credits  
4 for each dollar deposited into the gaming machine by way of  
5 the coin head or the bill acceptor.

6 After accruing credits on the credit meter, the player  
7 determines how many credits he wishes to wager on the next  
8 spin of the slot reels ("total bet") and then spins the  
9 reels by pressing the spin button or by pulling a handle.  
10 When the reels stop spinning, symbols are displayed on each  
11 of the slot reels. The player collects credits for  
12 predetermined winning symbol combinations that appear in  
13 specific locations ("pay lines") on the slot reels.  
14 Winning combinations typically require that three or more  
15 of the same symbols appear adjacent to each other reading  
16 from the leftmost position of a pay line to the right.

17 Credits are awarded to the player for each winning  
18 symbol combination based on a predetermined schedule ("pay  
19 table"). The number of credits indicated by the pay table  
20 is multiplied by the number of credits wagered on the  
21 winning pay line. For example, a player may wager two  
22 credits each on five pay lines, spin the reels, and collect  
23 twice the amount indicated on the pay table for a winning  
24 symbol combination appearing on a pay line.

1       Following any pays, the credits won are added to the  
2 player's balance of credits shown in the credit meter. As  
3 long as the player has credits on the credit meter, the  
4 player may continue to play the gaming machine or the  
5 player may collect the remaining balance of credits by  
6 pressing a Cash Out button the gaming machine. In  
7 addition, the player may view the rules of the game by  
8 pressing the Help button before any spin.

9       Every casino seeks to maximize revenues from its  
10 gaming devices. One criteria used by casinos is to measure  
11 the amount of the coin-in per square foot of casino floor  
12 space. Thus, a casino can increase its revenues by  
13 increasing the amount of coin-in per square foot. Based on  
14 the mathematical probabilities built into each gaming  
15 machine, the casino makes on average a percentage of each  
16 coin deposited in the machine: the more coin-in, the more  
17 revenue. The amount of coin-in, therefore, can be  
18 maximized in two main ways:

- 19       • First, increase the number of machines per  
20 square foot. With each generation of new slot  
21 machine, the machine carcass and footprint  
22 grows smaller. However, since the conventional  
23 slot machine is restricted by the size of the  
24 physical reels ("mechanical reels"), cathode

1 ray tube ("video reels"), or liquid crystal  
 2 displays ("LCD reels"), the reduction of the  
 3 overall size and depth of the slot machine is  
 4 limited.

- 5 • Second, increase the maximum total bet allowed
- 6 on each spin. With each new slot machine game,
- 7 the maximum bet which the player is allowed to
- 8 make grows larger. Since the conventional slot
- 9 player is not likely to wager his entire
- 10 bankroll on a single spin of the reels,
- 11 however, the maximum total bet per spin is
- 12 limited.

13 In addition to these two primary methods of increasing  
 14 revenue, coin-in may also be enhanced by increasing the  
 15 speed of play. For example, all other things being equal,  
 16 a game on a slot machine which takes six seconds to play  
 17 will result in more coin-in than a game on a slot machine  
 18 which takes eight seconds to play.

19 The speed of the play of each game becomes even more  
 20 noticeable when the situation of one player operating two  
 21 separate slot machines is considered. When a player wishes  
 22 to play two slot machine games at the same time, the player  
 23 must insert money into two coin slots or bill acceptors -  
 24 one on each slot machine. The player must monitor the

1 outcome of the spinning of the reels on two separate  
2 display screens - one on each slot machine. The player  
3 must also reach back and forth between the two slot  
4 machines to control the bet, spin and cash out buttons on  
5 each of the slot machines. Managing more than one machine  
6 to play multiple games at the same time, therefore, results  
7 in a much slower average speed of play. Furthermore, the  
8 physical effort involved in managing multiple machines  
9 decreases the player's overall enjoyment of playing the  
10 games.

11 With the foregoing problems in mind, it is an object  
12 of the present invention to provide a slot machine which  
13 requires reduced installation space and which will generate  
14 a higher total wager to increase revenues per square foot  
15 of casino floor space, while at the same time increasing  
16 average speed of play and enhancing the player's enjoyment  
17 of playing multiple games at the same time.

## 18 SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

19 The present invention includes a variety of methods of  
20 play that can be programmed on an electronic video slot  
21 machine. Each electronic video slot machine is programmed  
22 to operate two or more slot games at the same time. In a  
23 preferred embodiment of the present invention, the machine

1 displays two slot games on the same video display screen.  
 2 Each of the slot games may be identical in every respect,  
 3 including but not limited to the wagering options, the  
 4 symbol sets used on the reels, the graphics of the screen  
 5 design, the sounds used during the operation of the slot  
 6 game and the bonus features. Alternatively, the method of  
 7 the present invention may use different games, such as two  
 8 different slot games with different symbol sets, graphics,  
 9 sounds and bonus features; or two different types of games,  
 10 such as two video poker games or even a slot game with a  
 11 video poker game.

12 Each slot game shares a common pool of credits. All  
 13 wagers for each game are deducted from the common pool of  
 14 credits and all awards earned from each game are accrued  
 15 into the same common pool of credits and shown on the  
 16 common credit meter (e.g., the winnings of one game may be  
 17 used to pay for the wagers of the other game). In a  
 18 preferred embodiment of the present invention, the machine  
 19 contains only one common pool of credits. Alternatively,  
 20 any number of common pools of credits may be used, such as  
 21 two common pools of credits used by four players playing  
 22 the machine in two-person teams.

23 Each slot game plays independently of the other. A  
 24 wager made on one slot game has no effect on the wager made

1 on the other slot game; the play pattern or the play  
2 strategy employed by a player on one slot game has no  
3 effect on the play pattern or play strategy of the other  
4 slot game; and the outcome of one slot game does not affect  
5 the outcome of the other slot game. In a preferred  
6 embodiment of the present invention, the slot games are  
7 played independently as described above. Alternatively,  
8 the games may interact through common bonus features, such  
9 as a bonus game which may be activated by the outcomes  
10 achieved during the play of either slot game.

#### 11 BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

12 Figure 1 shows a perspective view of a gaming machine  
13 of the present invention.

14 Figure 2 shows a front view of the gaming machine of  
15 the present invention.

16 Figure 3 shows a front view of the screen display  
17 portion of the gaming machine of the present invention with  
18 a first representative game outcome.

19 Figure 4 shows a front view of the screen display  
20 portion of the gaming machine of the present invention with  
21 a second representative game outcome.

22 Figure 5 shows a front view of the screen display  
23 portion of the gaming machine of the present invention with

1 a third representative game outcome.

2 Figure 6 shows a front view of the screen display  
3 portion of the gaming machine of the present invention with  
4 a fourth representative game outcome.

5 **DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE PREFERRED EMBODIMENTS**

6 The preferred embodiment of present invention includes  
7 the play of base games and additional bonus features,  
8 including Wild symbols and Scatter pays.

9 **Base Games.** To play the base games, the player  
10 establishes a common pool of credits, plays one or more  
11 base games by choosing which games to play, selecting pay  
12 lines, setting the wager per pay line, spinning the reels,  
13 and collecting credits for winning symbol combinations and  
14 bonus features.

15 **Gaming Apparatus.** In a preferred embodiment of the  
16 present invention, two slot games are displayed side by  
17 side on the single video display in the gaming machine.  
18 However, any other orientation of the slot games could be  
19 used, such as one of the slot game being displayed above  
20 the other slot game on the same video display device. In  
21 addition, two or more slot games may be displayed  
22 simultaneously on one or more video displays.

23



Figures 1 and 2 show a representative gaming machine 10 that is configured to practice the present invention. The gaming machine 10 includes a video screen display 20 in any suitable location such as in the general center area of the gaming machine 10. Belly glass 48 and top glass 49 can be provided upon which can be printed or otherwise marked information about the game. The gaming machine 10 also includes a button panel 50 which provides the mounting area for a plurality of buttons used by the player to operate the gaming machine. The button panel 50 also can provide space for a coin head 80 into which the player deposits coins or gaming tokens to make a wager or to accrued credits on a credit meter. A bill acceptor 82 is also provided in any suitable location into which the player can insert paper currency or coupons which are also used to make wagers or to accrued credits on the credit meter. A coin tray 84 is also provided as is conventional into which coins are dispensed from a coin hopper (not shown) when a player wishes to cash out.

On the interior of the gaming machine 10 are the computer controls that operate the gaming machine as well as the other conventional hardware used in a gaming machine such as the coin hopper, the video monitor hardware, the wiring harness, the coin validator, the bill acceptor

1 equipment and other suitable devices used to make the  
2 gaming machine 10 operational.

3 The layout of the gaming machine 10 shown in Figures 1  
4 and 2 is only representative of one suitable layout and  
5 other layouts may be used as desired.

6 *Video Display.* In a preferred embodiment of the  
7 present invention, each of the slot games would have a five  
8 reel display using a five column by three row matrix.  
9 Alternatively, the games could utilize any number of  
10 columns and reels, such as a 3 column by 3 row matrix. As  
11 shown in Figures 1 and 2, the left slot game 22 and the  
12 right slot game 24 are positioned side by side, although  
13 any other suitable orientation may be used.

14 *Buttons.* In the preferred embodiment of the present  
15 invention, a set of buttons are mounted on the button panel  
16 50 and are used by the player to control the functions of  
17 each slot game -- the left slot game 22 and the right slot  
18 game 24. As shown in Figure 2, these buttons include  
19 Select Pay Lines 24L and 24R, Bet Per Line 26L and 26R, Max  
20 Bet 28L and 28R, Spin Reels 30L and 306R, Pay Table 24L and  
21 24R, and Help 32L and 32R. Each button may be further  
22 identified on the top of each button with "LEFT" and  
23 "RIGHT" titles, such as Spin LEFT Reels and Spin RIGHT  
24 Reels. Any or all of these control buttons may be

1 displayed on the video display and/or buttons hard wired to  
2 the gaming device. If necessary, any number of buttons may  
3 added to further facilitate control of the games

4 The preferred embodiment of the present invention can  
5 also use a set of control buttons to operate both games at  
6 the same time, such as Spin BOTH Reels button 40 that spins  
7 the reels of both slot games and Cash Out button 42 that  
8 issues the number of credits displayed on the Credits meter  
9 60 in coin, or other currency, to the player.

10 Meters. In the preferred embodiment of the present  
11 invention, a set of meters are shown on the video display  
12 screen 20 to display the salient information for each of  
13 the left game 22 and the right game 24, including Number of  
14 Pay Lines 52L and 52R, Amount Bet Per Line 54L and 54R,  
15 Total Bet 56L and 56R, and Paid 56L and 56R. The Number of  
16 Pay Lines meter 52L and 52R is associated with the Select  
17 Pay Lines button 24L and 24R and displays the current  
18 number of Pay Lines Selected. The Amount Bet Per Line  
19 meter 54L and 54R is associated with the Bet Per Line  
20 button 26L and 26R and displays the number of credits  
21 wagered per pay line. The Total Bet, meter 56L and 56R  
22 displays the cumulative value of the Number of Pay Lines  
23 52L and 52R and Amount Bet Per Line 54L and 54R; and the  
24 Paid meter 56L and 56R displays the number of credits won

1 on the last spin. In addition, the games both share the  
2 Credits meter 60 which displays the total number credits  
3 remaining in the common credit pool.

4 *Credit Pool.* In a preferred embodiment of the present  
5 invention, the player deposits coins, tokens or paper  
6 currency into the coin head slot 80 or a paper currency  
7 bill acceptor 82 to establish a common pool of credits.  
8 The amount of this common pool of credits is displayed to  
9 the player on the Credits meter 60. The common pool of  
10 credits increases and decreases according to the player's  
11 wins or losses and may be supplemented, if necessary, by  
12 the player by additional deposits of coins, tokens or paper  
13 currency.

14 *Choose Games.* In a preferred embodiment of the  
15 present invention, a single player may choose to play up to  
16 two base games at the same time on the same gaming machine.  
17 Alternatively, two players may share the machine with one  
18 player operating each game. Alternatively, the player may  
19 play one slot game and allow the other slot game to remain  
20 inactive.

21 *Select Pay Lines.* In a preferred embodiment of the  
22 present invention, each of the slot games have a plurality  
23 of pay lines upon which to wager. The pay lines wagered on  
24 by the player would be activated a predetermined order.

1 For example, the slot game may utilize nine pay lines of  
2 which the player's first wager is applied to pay line 1,  
3 the second wager is applied to pay line 2, the third wager  
4 is applied to pay line 3, and so on up until the ninth  
5 wager is applied to pay line 9. However, the games may  
6 utilize any other order of pay line activation and fewer or  
7 greater than nine pay lines may be used.

8 *Bet Per Line.* In a preferred embodiment of the  
9 present invention, the player sets the value of the wager  
10 on each pay line; the same amount is wagered on each pay  
11 line. Alternatively, the player could be allowed to make  
12 wagers of different amounts on each pay line. The total  
13 amount wagered is determined by summing the amounts wagered  
14 on each pay line.

15 *Spin Reels.* In a preferred embodiment of the present  
16 invention, the player then causes the slot machine to  
17 operate by effecting a "spin" of the reels. This can be  
18 done in any suitable manner, such as the player pressing a  
19 "spin" button on the machine's button panel and watching a  
20 video simulation of a reel slot machine.

21 *Symbol Set.* In a preferred embodiment of the present  
22 invention, each symbol is chosen from a set of twelve  
23 symbols. For each spin, the machine randomly displays  
24 three symbols from the symbol set on each reel. A common

1 theme can be used for the symbols, and in one embodiment,  
2 the symbols are related to a fishing theme. However, any  
3 suitable symbols may be used, including the traditional  
4 fruit symbols that commonly appear on other slot machines.  
5 Furthermore, fewer or greater than twelve symbols may be  
6 used as a symbol set.

7 *Winning Symbol Combinations.* In a preferred embodiment  
8 of the present invention, the player is paid for  
9 predetermined winning combinations of symbols that appear  
10 on an active pay line. Each winning combination may  
11 involve three or more of the same symbols that appear  
12 adjacent to each other reading from the leftmost position  
13 of a pay line to the right. Each winning combination pays  
14 the amount indicated on the game's pay table times the  
15 amount wagered on that pay line. Furthermore, any  
16 appropriate pay table may be used and each slot game may  
17 use its own pay table. Alternatively, any desired group of  
18 symbols may be designated as winning symbol combinations  
19 and fewer or greater than three symbols could be designated  
20 as winning symbol combinations.

21 *Base Games Example.* Sam Slotsky is standing in front  
22 of a nickel-denomination version of the preferred  
23 embodiment of the present invention. Sam sees two sets of  
24 5-reel slot games side-by-side on the video display; the

1 game 22 on the left is IGT's TEXAS OIL™ slot game and the  
 2 game 24 on the right is IGT's LITTLE GREEN MEN™ slot game.  
 3 Any suitable slot games may be used and the slot games may  
 4 both be the same slot game or may be different slot games  
 5 as in this example.

6 Below each game on the button panel 50 are seven  
 7 buttons: Select Pay Lines 24L and 24R, Bet Per Line 26L  
 8 and 26R, Bet Max 28L and 28R, Spin Reels 30L and 30R, Pay  
 9 Table 34L and 34R, Help 32L and 32R and Cash Out 36L and  
 10 36R. In addition, there are also four meters on the video  
 11 screen display 20 below each game: Number of Pay Lines 52L  
 12 and 52R, Amount Bet Per Line 54L and 54R, Total Bet 56L and  
 13 56R and Paid 58L and 58R. Between the games, in the  
 14 bottom-center of the video display 20, are two touch screen  
 15 button locations and one meter: Spin Both Reels touch  
 16 screen button location 66, Cash Out touch screen button  
 17 location 62, and Credits meter 60.

18 Sam presses the Pay Table 34L button for the left game  
 19 22 to view the pays for winning combinations achieved on  
 20 the left game 22. Using the numbers 1 to 12 to represent  
 21 the symbol set, with 10 as the Wild symbol and 11 and 12 as  
 22 the scatter symbols. The pay table for symbols 1 to 9 reads  
 23 as follows (refer to the Bonus Features section below for  
 24 more details on Wild symbols and Scatter Symbols):





1	9-9-9-9-9 25000	9-9-9-9 ..6000	9-9-9 .. 1500
2	8-8-8-8-8 12000	8-8-8-8.. 3200	8-8-8 .... 800
3	7-7-7-7-7 6500	7-7-7-7.. 1600	7-7-7 .... 400
4	6-6-6-6-6 3200	6-6-6-6.. 800	6-6-6 .... 200
5	5-5-5-5-5 1600	5-5-5-5.. 400	5-5-5 .... 100
6	4-4-4-4-4 1000	4-4-4-4.. 240	4-4-4 .... 60
7	3-3-3-3-3 500	3-3-3-3.. 120	3-3-3 .... 30
8	2-2-2-2-2 250	2-2-2-2.. 60	2-2-2 .... 15
9	1-1-1-1-1 100	1-1-1-1.. 20	1-1-1 .... 5

10      **5 Scatters**            15Free Spins  
 11      **4 Scatters**            9 Free Spins  
 12      **3 Scatters**            5 Free Spins  
 13

14      Sam then presses the Help button 32R to view the rules  
 15 of the LITTLE GREEN MEN™ right game 24. After reading the  
 16 rules for the right game 24, he returns to the base games  
 17 screen.

18      Sam deposits \$20 into the bill receptor and the  
 19 Credits meter counts up from 0 to 400 since the  
 20 denomination for this game is five cents per credit. Sam  
 21 then his chooses the wager on the left game 22:

- 22      • The left game's Number of Pay Lines meter 52L reads
- 23          1. Sam presses the Select Pay Lines button 24L four
- 24          times and the Number of Pay Lines meter 52L counts
- 25          up from 1 to 5. As Sam presses the Select Pay Lines
- 26          button 24L, the video display shows the locations of

1 each selected pay line on the 5 column by 3 row  
2 matrix. For example, the first pay line starts in  
3 the middle row of the first column and proceeds in  
4 the straight line through the middle row of columns  
5 2 through 5;

6 • The left game's Amount Bet Per Line meter 54L reads  
7 1. Sam presses the Bet Per Line button 26L two  
8 times and the Amount Bet Per Line meter 54L counts  
9 up from 1 to 3;

10 • The Total Bet meter 56L started at 1, but after  
11 Sam's adjustments it now reads 15; and

12 • The Paid meter 58L reads 0.

13 Sam's adjustments to the left game 22 have not  
14 affected the right game 24 at all. So, Sam uses the  
15 control buttons under the right game 24 to select his wager  
16 for the right game 24:

17 • The Number of Pay Lines meter 52R at 9;

18 • The Amount Bet Per Line meter 54R at 2;

19 • The Total Bet meter 56R at 18; and

20 • The Paid meter 58R reads 0.

21 After setting his wagers, Sam presses the Spin Reels  
22 button 30L under the left game 22. The Credits meter 60  
23 counts down from 400 to 385. The reels of the left game 22

1 spin and then come to a stop. Using the numbers 1 to 12 to  
2 represent the symbol set, with 10 as the Wild symbol and 11  
3 and 12 as the scatter symbols, the reels of the left game  
4 22 display the following symbols as shown in Figure 3:

5        3     1     6     7     5  
6        **4**    **4**    **4**    3     8     (Winning symbol combination  
7 in **bold**.)

8        6     6     1     9     7

9        The left game 22 awards Sam ninety credits for a  
10 winning symbol combination of **4-4-4** on pay line 1. The  
11 award reflects the left game 22 pay table which states that  
12 **4-4-4** pays thirty credits for each credit wagered upon the  
13 pay line; or thirty credits times three credits wagered by  
14 Sam on pay line 1. The Credits meter 60 counts up from 385  
15 to 475 and the left game Paid meter 58L reads 90.

16        Sam then presses the Spin Reels button 30R under the  
17 right game 24. The Credits meter 60 counts down from 475  
18 to 457. The reels of the right game 24 spin and then come  
19 to a stop. Using the numbers 1 to 12 to represent the  
20 symbol set, with 10 as the Wild symbol and 11 and 12 as the  
21 scatter symbols, the reels of the right game 24 display the  
22 following symbols as shown in Figure 3:

23

1	<b>4</b>	1	2	7	5
2	5	<b>4</b>	1	3	8
3	6	6	<b>4</b>	9	7

4 (Winning symbol combination in **bold**.)

5 The right game awards Sam 120 credits for a winning  
 6 symbol combination of **4-4-4** on pay line 4. The award  
 7 reflects the right game 24 pay table which states that **4-4-**  
 8 **4** pays sixty credits for each credit wagered upon the pay  
 9 line; or sixty credits times two credits wagered by Sam on  
 10 pay line 1. The Credits meter 60 counts up from 457 to 577  
 11 and the right game's Paid meter 58R reads 120.

12 Again, Sam presses the Spin Reels button 30R under the  
 13 right game. The Credits meter 60 counts down from 577 to  
 14 562. The reels of the right game 24 spin and, before the  
 15 reels stop, Sam presses the Spin Reels button 30L under the  
 16 left game 22. The Credits meter 60 counts down from 562 to  
 17 544. When the reels of the right game 24 stop, there are  
 18 no winning symbol combinations and the right game Paid  
 19 meter 58R reads 0. And when the reels of the left game 22  
 20 stop, there are two winning combinations which pay a  
 21 combined 150 credits. The Credits meter 60 counts up from  
 22 562 to 712 and the left game Paid meter 58L reads 150.

23 Sam continues to play the slot games by pressing the  
 24 Spin Both button 40. The Credits meter 60 counts down from

1 712 to 679. The reels of the right game 24 and the left  
2 game 22 spin and come to a stop as shown in Figure 4.  
3 Using the numbers 1 to 12 to represent the symbol set, with  
4 10 as the Wild symbol and 11 and 12 as the scatter symbols,  
5 the reels of the left game 22 display the following  
6 symbols:

7	2	2	2	2	2
8	5	4	1	4	9
9	7	1	3	9	7

10 (Winning symbol combination in **bold**.)

11 And the reels of the right game 24 display the  
12 following symbols:

13	2	1	5	8	3
14	5	4	6	4	4
15	3	2	3	6	2

16

17 The left game 22 awards Sam 750 credits for a winning  
18 symbol combination of **2-2-2-2-2** on pay line 2. The award  
19 reflects the right game's pay table which states that **2-2-**  
20 **2-2-2** pays two hundred fifty credits for each credit  
21 wagered upon the pay line; or two hundred fifty credits  
22 times three credits wagered by Sam on pay line 2. The  
23 Credits meter 60 counts up from 679 to 1,429 and the left  
24 game Paid meter 58L reads 750. The right game 24 did not

1 produce a winning symbol combination and the right game  
2 Paid meter 58R reads 0.

3 Content with his winnings, Sam presses the Cash Out  
4 button 42. The gaming device issues 1,429 nickels or any  
5 other form of currency, including cash, an EZ-PAY™ ticket,  
6 or electronic payment.

7

8 **Bonus Features.** During play of the base games, the player  
9 may receive special pays for bonus features, such as Wild  
10 Symbols and Scatter pays.

11 *Wild Symbols.* Wild symbols replace any or all other  
12 symbols in determining winning outcomes. Alternatively,  
13 wild symbols may only replace limited subsets of the other  
14 symbols. Wild symbols, therefore, increase the possibility  
15 of a player achieving winning combinations and the pay  
16 table must reflect that the wild symbols are in use. In a  
17 preferred embodiment of the present invention, the wild  
18 symbol acts as its own symbol (e.g., three wild symbols on  
19 a pay line) while at the same time a wild symbol could also  
20 replaces every other symbol. Alternatively, any suitable  
21 replacement rules for wild symbols could be used.

22 Each wild symbol may also be used to affect payouts  
23 which utilize one or more wild symbols. For example, a  
24 wild symbol used in a winning combination of symbols, may

1 double the value of the winning combination. The slot game  
2 can also be configured so that the wild symbols increase or  
3 decrease the value of any payout in any manner which  
4 results in an average value that can be utilized to control  
5 the gaming machine's overall average payouts. In the  
6 preferred embodiment of the present invention, however, the  
7 Wild symbols do not affect the value of the winning symbol  
8 combinations.

9 *Scatter Pays.* A scatter pay awards the player a  
10 predetermined payout for the appearance of a scatter  
11 symbol, or a combination of scatter symbols, anywhere on  
12 the main game screen display. This is known in the art as  
13 a "Scatter Pay" in that the scatter symbols may appear  
14 anywhere on an active pay line (i.e. a pay line upon which  
15 the player has made a wager), across multiple active pay  
16 lines, or even on a position upon which the player did not  
17 make a wager. Scatter pays award a specific number of  
18 credits and/or trigger a bonus feature, such as  
19 entertaining animations, free spins, enhanced pay table  
20 values, and/or selection of bonus objects.

21 In a preferred embodiment of the present invention, a  
22 scatter symbol combination of three or more scatter symbols  
23 award: a specific number of credits with an entertaining  
24 animation bonus feature; a selection of bonus objects

1 and/or free spins. The number of credits awarded may be  
2 determined by multiplying the total amount wagered by a  
3 random number within a predetermined range of numbers; or  
4 the number of free spins awarded may be set by the number  
5 of scatter symbols displayed on the reels. Alternatively,  
6 the value of the bonus feature could be determined by any  
7 other suitable calculation as long as the bonus feature  
8 results in an average value that can be utilized to control  
9 the overall average payouts of the slot game.

10 Wild symbols and Scatter pays do not necessarily  
11 result in the award of credits. The activation of the  
12 bonus feature may only result in a payout some percentage  
13 of the time. For example, Wild symbols may appear on the  
14 screen without forming a winning symbol combination.  
15 Scatter symbols may require the presence of another  
16 element, such as another special symbol. Alternatively, a  
17 bonus feature which pays more or less frequently could be  
18 used as long as the bonus feature results in an average  
19 value that can be utilized to control the overall average  
20 payouts of the slot game. In the preferred embodiment of  
21 present invention, Wild symbols do not always result in  
22 winning symbol combinations, however, Scatter pays always  
23 result in the award of credits.

24



1        *Bonus Feature Example.*

2        Sam Slotsky returns to the same nickel-denomination  
3 version of the preferred embodiment of the present  
4 invention, as described above in the Base Games Example  
5 section. Sam deposits \$20 into the bill acceptor and the  
6 Credits meter 60 counts up from 0 to 400. Sam then presses  
7 the Help buttons 32L and 32R to view the rules of the  
8 games:

- 9        • The rules of the left game 22 state that there are  
10        two bonus features: Wild symbols and Scatter pays.  
11        Wild symbols replace any symbol on the reels except  
12        for a Scatter symbol. Scatter pays of ten to one  
13        thousand times the Total Bet occur whenever three or  
14        more Scatter symbols appear anywhere on the slot  
15        reels.
- 16        • The rules of the right game 24 state that there are  
17        two bonus features: Wild symbols and Scatter pays.  
18        Wild symbols replace any symbol on the reels except  
19        for a Scatter symbol. Scatter pays of three to  
20        fifteen free games occur whenever three or more  
21        Scatter symbols appear anywhere on a pay line upon  
22        which the player wagered.

23        After reading the rules, Sam returns to the base games  
24 screen. Using the control buttons, Sam adjusts his wagers

1 on the left game 22 and the right game 24. For the left  
2 game 22, he sets the Number of Pay Lines 52L at 5 and the  
3 Amount Bet Per Line 54L at 3; and, for the right game 24,  
4 he sets the Number of Pay Lines 52R at 9 and the Amount Bet  
5 Per Line 54R at 2.

6 After setting his wagers, Sam presses the Spin Reels  
7 button 30L under the left game 22. The Credits meter 60  
8 counts down from 400 to 385. The reels of the left game 22  
9 spin and then come to a stop. Using the numbers 1 to 12 to  
10 represent the symbol set, with 10 as the Wild symbol and 11  
11 and 12 as the scatter symbols, the reels of the left game  
12 22 display the following symbols as shown in Figure 5:

13	11	1	<b>6</b>	7	5
14	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>4</b>	3	8
15	6	6	2	11	7

16 (Winning symbol combination in **bold**.)

17 The left game 22 awards Sam 290 credits for two  
18 winning symbol combinations of **4-10-4** on pay line 1 and **6-**  
19 **10-6** on pay line 5. The 10 symbol is Wild and acts as a 4  
20 symbol to make the **4-4-4** combination and then acts as a 6  
21 symbol to make the **6-6-6** combination. The 10 symbol does  
22 not replace as a Scatter symbols and, therefore, does not  
23 act as an 11 symbol.

24

1       The 290 credit award reflects the left game's pay  
 2 table which states that **4-4-4** pays thirty credits for each  
 3 credit wagered upon the pay line (e.g., thirty credits  
 4 times three credits wagered by Sam on pay line 1) and also  
 5 states that **6-6-6** pays one hundred credits for each credit  
 6 wagered upon the pay line (e.g., one hundred credits times  
 7 two credits wagered by Sam on pay line 5). The Credits  
 8 meter 60 counts up from 385 to 675 and the left game Paid  
 9 meter 58L reads 290.

10       Again, Sam presses the Spin Reels button 30L under the  
 11 left game 22. The Credits meter 60 counts down from 675 to  
 12 660. The reels of the left game 22 spin and then come to a  
 13 stop. Using the numbers 1 to 12 to represent the symbol  
 14 set, with 10 as the Wild symbol and 11 and 12 as the  
 15 scatter symbols, the reels of the left game display the  
 16 following symbols as shown in Figure 6:

17	11	1	6	7	5
18	4	<b>11</b>	4	3	8
19	6	6	2	<b>11</b>	7

20 (Winning symbol combination in **bold**.)

21       The left game 22 displays an entertaining animation of  
 22 oil pumping from an oil well and awards Sam one hundred  
 23 fifty credits for a Scatter symbol combination of three **11**  
 24 symbols anywhere on the slot reels. The award reflects the

1 left game pay table which states that three Scatter Symbols  
2 pay ten times the Total Bet. The Credits meter 60 counts  
3 up from 660 to 810 and the left game Paid meter 58L reads  
4 150.

5 Sam then presses the Spin Reels button 30R under the  
6 right game 24. The Credits meter 60 counts down from 810  
7 to 792. The reels of the right game 24 spin and then come  
8 to a stop. Using the numbers 1 to 12 to represent the  
9 symbol set, with 10 as the Wild symbol and 11 and 12 as the  
10 scatter symbols, the reels of the left game display the  
11 following symbols as shown in Figure 6:

12	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>12</b>	5
13	4	5	4	3	8
14	6	6	2	4	7

15 (Winning symbol combination in **bold**.)

16 The right game 24 awards Sam nine free spins for a  
17 Scatter symbol combination of four **12** symbols adjacent from  
18 left to right on pay line 3. The award reflects the right  
19 game pay table which states that four Scatter Symbols  
20 result in nine free spins. The game proceeds to spin nine  
21 times at the same wager level; Sam wins a total of 425  
22 credits. The Credits meter 60 counts up from 792 to 1,217  
23 and the right game Paid meter 58R reads 425.

24

1           Content with his winnings, Sam presses the Cash Out  
2 button 42. The gaming device issues 1,217 nickels or any  
3 other form of currency, including cash, an EZ-PAY™ ticket,  
4 or electronic payment.

5           The present invention is not constrained to parameters  
6 listed above. The number of games operated by the machine  
7 at the same time is not critical; more than two games can  
8 be used. The number of pay lines used in each game is also  
9 not critical; more or less than five pay lines can be used.  
10 The number of symbols located on each pay line may be more  
11 or less than the three symbol locations described above.  
12 However, it is preferable to have at least three symbol  
13 locations to provide mathematical combinations in  
14 sufficient amounts to offer reasonable winning payouts.  
15 Also the number of symbols with the symbol set used in a  
16 slot game may vary. However, it is preferable to have at  
17 least seven symbols within the symbol set to provide  
18 mathematical combinations in sufficient amounts to offer  
19 reasonable winning payouts.

20           In addition, the present invention may be modified to  
21 work on multiple video displays or sets of mechanical slot  
22 reels with a base game on each display or set of reels.  
23 Existing slot machines with multiple games use multiple  
24 reel mechanisms that are dependent and, therefore, do not

1 allow for separate operation. The present invention,  
2 however, uses video displays and allows each base game to  
3 operate independently using separate controls, pay tables,  
4 wagers, symbols sets, base game rules, bonus features and  
5 animations. Furthermore, the base games may be played one-  
6 at-a-time, in an alternating fashion, or simultaneously.

7 Given the flexibility of the present invention,  
8 therefore, the preferred embodiment listed above should be  
9 considered illustrative and not limiting. Various  
10 modifications and additions may be made and will be  
11 apparent to those skilled in the art. Accordingly, the  
12 invention should not be limited by the foregoing  
13 description, but rather should be defined by the following  
14 claims.

09923573-080601